

## Minutes of the Board of the Carolina Wetlands Association meeting

October 19, 2020; 6:30 pm

Location: Virtual Meeting

Attending:

**Board members:** Rick Savage, Kim Matthews, Kristie Gianopulos, Norton Webster, Curt Richardson, George Matthis, Dan Hitchcock, Kristine Cherry, George Howard

**Non-board members:** Linda Wendling, Rachel Massa, Ginny Baker, Amanda Johnson, Robert Truesdale, Lena Simmons

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### 6:35 Meeting Called to Order

- Adoption of the Agenda (**VOTE**) Dan H motioned to approve agenda with change to date, George M. seconded, no objections
- Does anyone have any potential conflicts of interest with the agenda? No one said yes.
- Adoption of the Minutes July 2020 (**VOTE**) – Rick S. motioned to accept minutes from July meeting, George M. seconded, no objections

### 6:40 General Announcements

Rick S noted that Chowan River basin management plan is out for public comment until October 30, 2020.

Dan H. getting started on a NOAA SeaGrant project – studying flooding of immediate coast of SC, modeling, data collection, green vs. gray infrastructure. Trying to put a \$ value on it. 2 year project; wants to continue to share every time we meet about their progress.

George H. Started a new company called RS Shorelines (rsshorelines.com) for living shorelines, 25 projects underway. All in coordination with NC Coastal Federation.

### 6:45 Committee Reports (5 minutes each)

- Program Committee - **Jessica/Jim/Carrie** (Rick gave the report)
  - Recreational Activities in our Wetland Treasures (**Jim**)
  - Engagement of our Wetland Treasures Community (**Carrie**)
  - Self-Guided hikes and a hike challenge (**Jessica**)
  - 2021 Wetland Treasures (**Carrie**)
    - Getting together soon to look at 2021 treasures
    - Sylvia put together a nice spreadsheet of recreation opportunities at the treasures to post to website and put into a brochure
    - Planning to have a tentative list of 2021 treasures by the November board meeting
    - Want to get a logo designed for the program and getting signs made (using a graphic designer)(figuring out cost of signs)

- Trying to figure out some tours for 2020 treasures
- Science Committee - **Ginny/Robert**
  - Met in September to talk about where people were at on their white papers; hoping for more progress by November meeting. Heather had completed a paper on climate change – in review now. (living shorelines photos available from RSshorelines.com in photos area)
  - Ramsar Application status (**Kristie/George/Curt**)
    - Curt R. met with USFWS (Howard Phillips, Sara Ward and company) and is now finalizing the RAMSAR files for submission. He got all the information he needed and the new contact and how it has to be submitted etc. He will add a few things and clean up the document and then we are good to go. Once submitted to the USFWS International Office, they will let us know if we need to add anything. – Everything looks positive, mainly cleaning up things and creating reference list and picture portfolio. Hoping to have a submission by end of October. We send it to USFWS and then they submit it ultimately for Ramsar designation.
    - State of the Wetlands Report – coming along; might end up being two papers
  - Status of Whitepapers
    - Water Quality and Pocosin Lakes
    - Carbon Sequestration
    - Wetlands and Climate Change
    - Wetlands and Flooding
- Development Committee – **Kim**
  - Volunteer Coordinator report – **Rachel Massa**
    - [Google form for volunteer hours](#)
    - 189.5 hrs reported since started using the Google form; 20 different people
    - More people should be putting in their hrs
    - Activities range from committee projects, committee meetings, board meetings
    - Swansboro project needs to be added or specified when people adding their time.
    - Will be sending out monthly reminders to log hours with that form
    - 23 requests to volunteer since February (about 2-3 per month)
  - Photo Contest
    - Sent emails to local photography clubs; photos due October 5
    - Had about 40 submissions from about 15 people
    - Committee of 3 people (2 board members, 1 nonboard member) reviewed photos and selected 13
  - Fundraising Plan (See Executive Committee)
- Policy Committee – **George M**

- Mission statement (see Document) – added rulemaking to activities, internal operating policies – Dan H. said very well written and motioned to approve, Rick S. second, all in favor
  - Financial Policy (see Document) – Norton and Heather worked on it; shows a level of professionalism that speaks to the organization. Kristine C. added that it will be a good guidance document for us. Norton still needs to add the chart of accounts from the bookkeeper. This is the last thing that needs to be done – will be completed for the November meeting and then will be voted on to accept.
  - COVID 19 policy/waiver (see Document) – At the request of the board to come up with something to not open ourselves up to potential problems with people going out. This is so we can move forward with the volunteer monitoring program, treasure tours, etc. Kristine Cherry made motion to approve the policy/waiver, Rick S. seconded, all in favor. (This is the updated version with info@carolinawetlands.org as the contact information and replacing all mention of CarWA with the full association name.)
  - Employee manual status – hope to have something ready for the next board meeting; working from an example
- Executive Committee – **Kim M.**
    - Review 2020 Budget
      - Underspending the planned budget
      - Identified potential needs (Wetland Treasures signs, graphic designer, travel reimbursements, especially for the Swansboro project)
    - Any big focus/campaign for the 2021
      - Pocosin Lakes wanted to put on an event celebrating their restoration; excited about being a wetland treasure – we should be a part of this (new banner and materials, tent, table)
      - Potential costs associated with RAMSAR announcement – need to be prepared to host some events, etc.
    - Fundraising
      - Sponsorships
        - What is our Goal? (\$500; 20 sponsors = \$10,000)
          - First email, then phone call to 2020 sponsors – thank you with a magnet and calendar
        - Who else should be targets?
          - EcoBot, more environmental consultants?
          - George H still has a list of engineers, mitigation, natural design they were working from last year; he'll send the list to Kim/Rick
          - Maybe outdoor equipment suppliers or outfitters, plant nurseries
        - Listed on website, included in presentations, logos posted at events
        - George M asked for something we can report/hand to someone as far as how many people we can reach. Info is on our website, but doesn't say how many people we reach, so Kim M. will add that. Finalization by next board meeting.
      - Calendar Update (**Kristie**)
        - Switch to eco-friendly printing (Cost = \$8.26 each)

- Amount to print = 150
    - \$25 donation or more, get a calendar
  - Annual Giving Campaign
    - What is our Goal? \$2,000 (\$25/calendar for 125 (out of the 150) that is a profit of **\$1,888** (125 x \$25 = \$3,125 - \$1,240 = \$1,888))
    - Other suggestions for the campaign - testimonials for the work we have done this year.
    - Will run from Nov 15 to Dec 15 – starting earlier this year than previously
    - Will be all about the calendar, focusing on our different stories (our testimonials for the work we have done – eg wetland treasures program, projects, etc., and what we want to do next year like wetland treasure signs, etc.)
    - A little more streamlined than last year.
  - Board Retreat (see below)
- Finance Committee – **Heather/Norton**
  - Balance - funds available \$8,844.46 (net expenditures since 7/24/20 has been \$316.45)
  - Budget update – not much activity at all in last few months, beyond travel reimbursement
  - Procedural Policy update and Policy Committee review -
  - 2021 Budget - plan to have proposed budget for next board meeting
  - Norton still needs to go through with Chad to convert everything over for First Citizens Bank to him as treasurer

## 7:15 Project Status

- Swansboro (**Rick S.**)
  - Board of Commissioners meeting on July 13, 2020
  - Norton, Chad, David meeting with Board of Commissioners and Planning Committee to plan next steps on September 21, 2020
    - Getting a presentation on
      - Carolina Wetlands Association
      - Wetland Value and NBS
      - Wetland Regulation
      - Discussion and listening about their Land Use Plan and Watershed Plans
    - Resilient Coastal Communities Program -- Should qualify for funding
  - Need to find someone with experience developing ordinances (recommendations)
  - Coming up with goals with Swansboro for codifying wetland protection, identifying sites for restoration, etc.
  - New Resilient Coastal Communities program (with Div. of Coastal Management) – want to fund projects and find communities
  - OneDrive has a projects folder with files from these presentations
- Stony Run (Dunn, NC) (**Rick**)
  - Still waiting to on EEG grant for the Planning process (\$38K) – should hear any time.
  - Wesley has started contacting landowners who are not individual owners

- Wesley participating in Imagine Dunn, Parks and Rec Board meeting to introduce project ideas.
- Need to have a meeting on this soon
- **Volunteer Wetlands Monitoring (Kim)**
  - Initial site visits and planning
    - Hemlock Bluffs on July 22 - Determined general veg plot locations, etc.
    - Mason Farm on July 29 - Determine locations of monitoring sites
    - Robinson Mill Pond - Determine location of the two monitoring sites.
  - Still developing the QAPP
  - Goal to hire coordinator by end of the year.
  - Meeting on Friday to make more progress, including hiring a coordinator.

**7:30 Curt Richardson** on the Duke Wetlands Center expansion – Duke has signed off on maintaining the wetland center after he retires. Hoping to expand the center. Climate change efforts will be specifically targeted to water (quality/quantity) and also climate resilience – becoming a major focus to Duke soon. This is a big deal for the Nichols School of the Environment (wetland center will play a big role in that). Wetland center will have a branch in Beaufort. Oyster project, coastal restoration project, coastal resilience proposals.

**7:45 Kristie G.** – Possible Unique Wetland Nomination – Roberdo bog outside of Troy, NC off Rt 24

- Small bog wetland in the western Piedmont with lots of Coastal Plain species, surrounded by a longleaf pine community; owned and managed by the US Forest Service and part of the Uwharries National Forest. Roadway expansion will encroach into watershed for this wetland and bring hazards closer (particularly for animals venturing south). Two species of special concern have been documented there, as well as the disjunct Coastal plain plant species.
- Writing letter to NC DOT to project engineer to make them aware of our concern about impacts to this unique wetland
  - Board is in favor, no objection
  - Executive committee will read the letter, Rick S will send it; sent to board as a notification
- Pursuing Unique Wetland Classification:
  - US Forest Service, NC NHP, and NC Wildlife Resource Commission will be supportive of doing this
  - No one on the board has objection to pursuing this

**7:50 Board Retreat (Kim and all)**

- a. Purpose:
  - Review Strategic plan for work items and how do we measure our progress toward goals?
  - Kristine Cherry wants to make this meeting really delving into the Strategic Plan, looking at where making progress and where not, and why. What resources we need or need to allocate to make progress, if there are gaps.
    - Develop Community Support Framework

- b. Virtual vs. In- person – tentatively hybrid of people in person and virtual at this point. Kristine Cherry recommended an anonymous survey to inform the planning process to understand how comfortable people are with meeting in person socially distanced vs. virtually. Kristine can also lend her expertise to help make a virtual meeting more engaging.
- c. Location – TBD – need to think about this
- d. Date – *set for Feb 20, 2021*
- e. Dan H. would like to come; wants to make sure it's a meaningful meeting. He says SC people need to get together with board. He said in-person is critical, especially at this time; he's willing to travel up and bets that Sarah would be as well (she's not on the board, but has become a real point person for SC work).
- f. Executive Committee will meet to discuss and plan

**8:05 Staffing - Student intern(s)** – want to develop protocols and ideas for student internships. Many volunteers contacting us are interested in experience. Want to make job descriptions and requirements for spring and summer internships. Undergrad or graduate level expected – with defined projects to work on with scope. Accountability and goals to achieve.

**8:10 Other Business**

Rick S. – Lena Simmons, new volunteer, from Portsmouth, VA where she served on the wetlands board there. Local government experience will be invaluable with Swansboro project.

**8:20 Adjourn (VOTE)**

Dan H. made motion to adjourn. Curt R. seconded. All in favor.